



Commonwealth of Kentucky
Office of the Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Motorists warned: If you're over the limit, you'll be under arrest

Campaign against drunken driving runs through Labor Day

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Aug. 20, 2009) — The Kentucky Office of Highway Safety (KHOS) will join law enforcement and highway safety agencies across the nation, Aug. 21 through Labor Day, to take part in the "Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest" crackdown on impaired driving.

Gov. Steve Beshear and Transportation Secretary Joe Prather joined KOHS and the Louisville Metro Police Department to launch the campaign during a news conference today at the Kentucky State Fair in Louisville.

"Highway safety has always been a high priority of this administration," Gov. Beshear said. "We fully support this campaign and law enforcement officers throughout the state working to keep impaired drivers off the road."

Drunken driving is one of America's deadliest crimes. More than 13,000 people are killed nationwide each year in highway crashes involving a driver or motorcycle operator with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 or higher.

"A BAC of 0.08 is the legal limit," said Chuck Geveden, executive director of the Office of Highway Safety. "But that doesn't necessarily mean you can safely drive at 0.07. Everyone's different, and the rule should be — don't get behind the wheel if you've had anything at all to drink."

Last year in Kentucky, there were approximately 6,000 alcohol-related crashes, resulting in 2,218 injuries and 182 deaths. Jefferson County ranked No. 1, with 1,107 such collisions, which caused 607 injuries and 17 fatalities.

Louisville Metro Police Chief Robert White said enforcement officers will be out in force during this holiday period. “Our message is simple — Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest. The goal is to get impaired drivers off of the roads,” White said.

Gov. Beshear encouraged motorists to take a simple precaution to help prevent injury or death.

“Wearing a seat belt is your best defense against a drunk driver and Kentuckians are buckling up now more than ever. In fact, we’re announcing today that our seat belt usage rate increased from 73.3 percent in 2007 to 80 percent in 2008,” Gov. Beshear said.

Driving with a BAC of 0.08 or higher is illegal in every state. All states also have zero tolerance laws, meaning it is illegal for anyone under 21 to drive after drinking any amount of alcohol.

Alcohol affects skills essential to operating a motorcycle: balance and coordination. In 2007, the picture for motorcycle riders was particularly bleak. In fatal crashes that year, a higher percentage of motorcycle riders — 27 percent — had a BAC of 0.08 or higher than any other type of motor vehicle driver.

“Impaired driving is no accident — nor is it a victimless crime,” Geveden said. “Violators often face jail time, loss of their driver’s license, higher insurance rates, attorney fees, lost work time and dozens of other expenses. The greatest risk, however, is taking someone’s life.”

“The message is simple,” said Beshear. “If you are over the limit, you will be under arrest.”

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